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Viewing cable 07MANAGUA493, ALN SEEKS ASSISTANCE TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM, PREPARE

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Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at theparagraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#07MANAGUA493**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07MANAGUA493	2007-02-24 00:09	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Managua

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>
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<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2758764.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2758753.aspx>
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<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>
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<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3991/dra-yadira-centeno-desmiente-cable-diplomatico-eeuu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9209
INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 0969
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAGUA 000493

SIPDIS

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WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [NU](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: ALN SEEKS ASSISTANCE TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM, PREPARE FOR MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

REF: MANAGUA 0471

Classified By: Charge d,Affaires a.i. Peter M. Brennan. Reasons 1.4 (B ,D).

¶1. (C) Summary: The Nicaraguan Liberal Alliance (ALN) is in debt from its campaign commitments and urgently needs funding to maintain its momentum, enable leader Eduardo Montealegre to emerge as the uncontested leader of the opposition, and prepare for the 2008 municipal elections. The ALN planning coordinator and its treasurer recently reported that many ALN supporters are hard pressed to support their families and are seeking other options because government positions are closed to them. The ALN planning coordinator attributes much of the party's difficulties to its lack of organization and cohesion, but assert that the ALN needs funds and capacity building to resolve these issues. The party is upgrading its website to allow people in Nicaragua and abroad to contribute on line. The Charge outlined the kinds of U.S. training opportunities and encouraged the ALN to consider establishing a 501 (c) (3) foundation to support the party. ALN leaders met with POL and USAID the following day to explore training options in more detail. End Summary.

ALN Confronts Campaign Debt, Cash Flow Problems

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¶2. (C) ALN Planning Coordinator Kitty Monterrey and Treasurer Roberto Serrano warned Charge and PolCouns on February 20 that, although ALN presidential candidate Eduardo Montealegre placed second in the November race and he is considered to be the most prominent opposition leader by far, the party is in debt from its campaign commitments to a tune of \$1.5 million. Monterrey stated that the party's creditors (mostly media) are patient, and the news of the debt has not leaked to the public, while ALN caucus Assembly deputies and party headquarter employees are each contributing 4,000 cordobas (about \$220) per month towards debt payment.

¶3. (C) Monterrey explained that the ALN urgently needs funding to keep afloat -- at least \$75,000 per month to run its headquarters -- plus robust training in party organization and strengthening, communications strategy, leadership, polling, community outreach, and training of ALN legislators. Monterrey and Serrano voiced frustration that the ALN is unable to help its supporters -- who are hard pressed to support their families -- because the party enjoys no access to government jobs and does not have a budget to hire people. Regarding the ALN's departmental and municipal offices, Monterrey said local party supporters along with the

private sector are defraying these expenses.

Matching Party Strengthening Needs with Training Options

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¶4. (C) Monterrey attributed much of her party's difficulties to its lack of organization and cohesion, but again, asserted that without funds and capacity building, the ALN will be unable to resolve these issues. The Charge mentioned the IRI-USAID training of National Assembly lawmakers, most of whom were members of the ALN caucus, as the type of assistance we can provide. Monterrey commented that the training would have been more beneficial if it had been open to members of party leadership, not exclusively lawmakers. She recommended that an organized training strategy with party leadership participation would be helpful. The Charge suggested that Monterrey meet with POL and USAID to explore training options and how to effectively coordinate them.

Clarifying Party-Civil Society Relations

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¶5. (C) Citing the Ambassador's recent op-ed on civil society, Monterrey praised the Ambassador's message, but opined that it does not completely reflect the harsh reality. For example, the previous day the National Assembly had approved the registration of 113 NGOs, and 99% are associated with the FSLN, said Monterrey. She next raised the relationship of civil society organizations and her party, sharing her concern that some NGOs that claim to support the ALN's political position do not and may not be contributing to defending or strengthening Nicaragua's democracy. Instead, some of these groups respond to the interests of

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individual party politicians, ALN National Assembly Deputy Eliseo Nunez, Sr., for example. The Charge clarified that we are aware of Sandinista control of the vast majority of Nicaraguan NGOs and that the purpose of the Ambassador's piece was to let it be known that if President Ortega takes the path of Chavez vis-s-vis independent NGOs, we will not remain silent, and we are committed to helping independent NGOs. (Comment: NGO competition over limited donor funds appears to be at an all-time high, placing the newer, independent NGOs at a disadvantage over the more experienced and savvy FSLN-associated groups. The latter know how to write proposals that will attract donors, while the former are inexperienced in the tradecraft.)

¶6. (C) Monterrey offered to forward a comprehensive list of NGOs that indeed support ALN efforts, mentioning the NGOs 11 de Julio (11th of July) and la Cruzada por la Democracia (Crusade for Democracy) as among those close to the ALN. She acknowledged that to the degree her party consolidates and resolves its internal conflicts, its relationship with civil society groups will be clearer and more constructive. The Charge explained that our democracy assistance package includes components to help civil society, capacitate democratically committed political parties, and defend independent media, clarifying that we do not/not provide direct assistance to political parties. To maximize these limited resources, it behooves the ALN to improve its communications with NGOs, the Charge suggested.

Party Financing - Foreign and Domestic Support

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¶7. (C) Returning to the ALN's financial needs, Serrano, who handled Montealegre's fundraising campaign, recounted that he had maintained a low-profile during the campaign, but now as ALN treasurer and member of the board of directors, he will assume a more public profile. Part of his new activities include upgrading the party web site to allow people in Nicaragua and abroad to contribute on line to the ALN, including monthly plans, if they so wish. The Charge encouraged Serrano to explore establishing a 501 (c) (3)

foundation -- like the Nicaraguan-American Foundation -- to support the party and offered to look into arranging a voluntary visitor program for Serrano so he could meet with U.S. fundraising experts.

¶8. (C) On the subject of domestic support for the ALN, Serrano shared his disappointment over Nicaragua's business elite and the failure of some, like Carlos Pellas and Ramiro Ortiz, to deliver on their campaign finance commitments to Montealegre. Fortunately, some of the smaller financiers were more forthcoming, said Serrano, who recognized that smaller donations from many sources can also help a campaign. He also confirmed that the Foro Liberal group will assist with fundraising. The support would enable the ALN to cover its monthly costs so it may maintain its momentum and emerge as the clear opposition party. The party will also need backing to prepare for the October 2008 municipal elections -- including buying air time and radio frequencies. Serrano suggested that our good offices with the private sector would be helpful. Polcouns suggested Serrano approach other embassies for assistance and the private sectors of neighboring countries.

Comment

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¶9. (C) According to the latest Cid Gallup poll (Reftel), Eduardo Montealegre leads the opposition. To take advantage of his popularity, however, and to build up his party -- whose support, according to the same poll, has waned -- Montealegre must consolidate his leadership among the opposition and the ALN must evolve from a campaign alliance into a solid, well-equipped political machine. He will need resources to achieve this objective. Poloffs and USAID elections coordinator met with Monterrey on February 22 to discuss training and other support options. Monterrey will next meet with IRI and NDI country directors. We will also follow up on capacity building for fundraisers and continue to engage the local private sector.

BRENNAN